



The South India --- CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

SEPTEMBER 2000

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THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH SEPTEMBER 2000

Next to God we are indebted to women, first for life itself, and then for making it worth having. - *(Christian Bovee)*

When Winston Churchill was told that writers were declaring that, by the year 2100, women would be ruling the world, his rejoinder, with a twinkle, was just one word: 'Still?'

Woman was made from the rib of man. She was not created from his head - to top him, nor from his feet - to be stepped upon. She was made from his side - to be equal to him; from beneath his arm - to be protected by him; near his heart - to be loved by him. - *(Anon)*

Life perhaps is the most inclusive phenomena. It is a gift of grace and an offering of love from above. When He breathed Life over all the creation God saw that it was good; And life therefore is divine, and precious.

A mother is not one who gives birth to her children but a humane being who feels the pain of children of all people everywhere as though they are born of her womb. - *(A Nicaraguan Mother)*

Since all humans possess a rational soul and are created in God's likeness, since they have the same nature and origin, have been redeemed by Christ, and enjoy the same divine calling and destiny, the basic equality of all must receive increasingly greater recognition. *(Second Vatican Council)*

Cover Page: Anna Matthew

RNI No. 1170/57
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THE SOUTH INDIA CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India
September 2000

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CONTENTS

Towards discovering creative participation and leadership of women	3
- <i>The Rt. Rev. Dr. George Isaac</i>	
Erosion of Values to Holistic Living	5
- <i>Rev. Mrs. Nirmala Vansantha Kumar</i>	
The Church's Response to AIDS	13
- <i>Dr. Daniel Ezhilarasu</i>	

Sound the Alarm

Off late our television programmes and shows betray utter irresponsibility on the part of those who produce the programmes as well as those who sponsor them. It is obvious that the big business is behind all these things and we all know whom the big business worships. Their gods are crass materialism, selfish consumerism and of course the supreme deity of all decadent culture, *the Mammon*. What was confined to the tinsel world namely violence and sex have now entered the small screen thus invading the privacy of every drawing room with a worse companion in tow namely a desire for making easy money.

Once this culture of making easy money is promoted, corruption of the people and the community is only the next step because the whole value system gets corrupted and people only keep dreaming of making easy money. Hard work, industriousness, enterprise, entrepreneurship, dynamism and initiative - all take a back seat. This kind of programming in the context of a developing society where food, shelter, clothing, drinking water, education, health and hygiene, roads and drainage system are still big issues, is a highly inflammable heady mixture, an explosive cocktail as the whole thing is done at the expense of the poor people.

Some channels have taken to this kind of irresponsible programming in order to increase their viewership and promote the products of their sponsors. While this ruins the poor and the middle class in terms of erosion of their morals and values which is going to cost them dearly in terms of impoverishment of their lives, there are those who would even legitimize this materialism and consumeristic trend of the media. But it is the big business and the icons of the media who really laugh all their way to the bank at the expense of the poor and the

middle class people who suffer and lead a miserable existence all their lives.

But once people are fed on materialism and consumerism it doesn't take long for them to become greedy and avaricious. Slowly their values get distorted and false and pseudo values are installed in their place. What was seen as life negating and life diminishing is now seen to be necessary for life enhancement and slowly dishonesty, sloth, corruption and other vices get hold of the people and decadence of the culture and the degeneration of the individuals, communities and the society set in. Since the media simply apes the West and they don't seem

A VIEW FROM THE PEW

to learn any lesson from what the West has bitterly experienced, lot of responsibility rests on the shoulders of parents to exercise utmost wisdom and discretion in guiding their children in the way they should go. The importance of this parental guidance assumes great significance in this context.

While it is heartening to note that a public interest litigation has been launched against the '*Kaun Banega Crorepati*' which went on the air on *Star Plus* recently, it is time a standing panel of concerned citizens is formed to act as a watch dog against deterioration of values in media and launch necessary corrective action to safeguard the interests of the public. At the same time care should be taken to see that this does not lead to witch hunting and cultural policing, an instance of medicine being worse than the malady! While creativity, enterprise and initiative have to be encouraged it would be better for the media itself to come up with a self-imposed code of conduct that would keep before them the *summon bonum* of the general public and the society at large.

Natural calamities

Off and on various parts of In-

dia have been devastated by droughts and floods. Just last week unprecedented rains have wreaked havoc in Andhra Pradesh on account of a depression in the Bay.

Unfortunately large areas of our land are dependent on the monsoon for their irrigation needs and farm output. A major characteristic of the monsoon has been depressions in the Bay which are a blessing in disguise since they not only bring the much needed water that our parched land needs but also the unwanted cyclones and floods. Just in one day there has been a downpour of 25-35 cms. of rain even in the interior areas of Hyderabad and Nandyal and Cuddappah and Kurnool districts. People have been taken unprepared not because they had not been warned beforehand but the fury of the heavens had never been expected on this scale!

There is a heart-rending incident of a mother and her two sons who were about to be rescued by a helicopter; the six year old boy slipped and was washed away and the mother clutching her infant son desperately tried to clutch the life line that was dangling before her and her infant son also slipped from her grip and was washed away and unable to bear this agony of seeing both her children being washed away right before her eyes, she also gave up her will to live and let go of the life line and got drowned in the writhing fury that was raging right below her feet!

It is one thing to rush aid to people suffering because of 'acts of God' but another thing to plan and prosecute prevention measures such as constructing new embankments and strengthening the existing ones without in any way upsetting the ecological balance. Rain harvesting measures must be adopted immediately. We need rains for without it we face draughts but at the same time we need to devise some permanent methods to protect ourselves from nature's unpredictable fury.

A Word From your General Secretary

Despite our education and new found identities confining us to nuclear families, the church finds its existence and identity within the lives of the communities. However, in the wake of urbanisation and industrialisation, the danger of the disfigurement of the community creeps in where there is negligence in christian community-centred nourishment. The faith has to be passed on to generations with the excitement of being in communities. Even as the growth of the church is viewed with suspicion by many, our primary witness ought to be a witness in community.

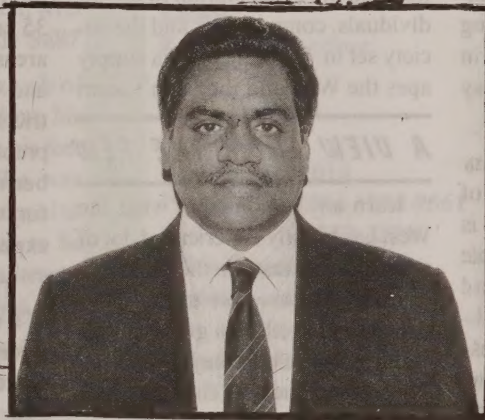
It is sad that a few areas of our life as the church are sending out unimpressive images forgetting that we are watched carefully by the world around us. I refer to our reliance on litigations. Can we ever learn lessons to sort out and solve our problems within the community as envisaged in Acts 15? Only then can we claim to be the true followers of Christ.

I understand that the CSI Millennium Festival and the Family and Youth Conference of the Council of Churches in North America went off very well at the 'Pigeon Forge, Smoky Mountains' Tennessee, from 10th to 13th of August 2000. The Synod Youth Secretary, Rev. Vinod Victor returns from the Conference with fond impressions and rich experiences carrying with him many concerns. We are still awaiting the return of the Moderator, K.J. Samuel who, I am told, conducted the proceedings of the council with great care and wisdom bestowed by the Holy Spirit. In this connection, I sincerely pray that these churches with the identity of the Church of South India in North America would be able to find a meaningful relationship with the lo-

cally available partners of the CSI. Only then can we maintain our credibility, not letting the national ecumenical and organic unity to be diluted.

I am glad to inform you that I will be proceeding to Toronto, Canada, to participate in the Anglican Provincial Secretaries meet between 23rd and 31st of August, 2000.

According to a UN Source women



are half the world's people, one-third of the official work-force and two-thirds of the world's work-hours. Yet they receive only one-tenth of the world's income and own even less than that.

In the recent decades there have been many efforts to introduce various measures to liberate women to ensure their safety and dignity. Millions of women in the world and in our country in particular still do not have the access to education, necessary health care and are always misused in the work they do both inside and outside the home. Women of the third world countries without any exception do experience deep injustices in spite of the fact that they are the back bone of our human community; yet their needs are not genuinely taken into consideration.

Nearly two thirds of women get malnourished particularly the mothers of babes. The women between the

ages 20 to 50 suffer from anaemia. Added to this the domestic and social violence has caused a great damage to the growth and emancipation of women. Everyday in some part of the land there have been cases of rape and molestation. Every one hour somewhere in this land the women are beaten by their spouses. Millions of women are battered each year. The rate of assaults against women particularly between the ages of 20 and 30 has radically increased. More than

one million women seek medical assistance for injuries caused by battering. Several young women flee from the homes because of the violence, poverty and threat to their dignity and are on the streets.

The church and christian families are in no way exceptional as it makes very little difference in the light of the above and such difference

probably would have been achieved because of education. Therefore I encourage the leaders and the presbyters of the church to conscientise and prepare a viable atmosphere in the congregations in the rural sections leading to basic education; make the women in the dalit and rural section who are more dependent on the society, aware of the better access to resources such as land credit and tools etc. introduce appropriate technology that takes women's work into account, set up development projects that cater to and involve women; encourage educated, talented women to take up decision making positions who can be responsible for the immediate communities; create a viable atmosphere particularly to the young women from the rural and weaker contexts with opportunities to improve their careers. I want to assure you that the CSI is with them in this laudable venture. God be with you all.

-Rev. G. Dyvasirodam

Towards Discovering Creative Participation and Creative Leadership of Women in the Life of the Church

The Rt. Rev. George Isaac*

Looking at some of the basic understanding of the church, and the mission and the role of the women, we need to have a clear grasp of what the life and mission of the church today is and then only we will be able to understand the leadership role of women in the church.

We have in our world several items, articles like table, chair, stage with steps made of wood - all having different forms. What decides the form of everything? Why the table is not made just like a chair, why the chair is not just like a stage? The purpose decides the form and this is a very basic understanding of everything.

In order to understand the form i.e., the lifestyle of the church and the purpose behind the church we have to know what the mission of the church is. The mission of the church, in the words of Mark is, "Jesus came into the world to save sinners, to preach the kingdom of God and to make people repent and to believe in the good news."

The performance of the church is to be a co-worker with God in the kingdom building. It needs to have a particular form. If you look into this we find three interesting aspects. The mission is the kingdom of God. Jesus gave two methodologies and these methodologies evolve a style. God's kingdom is not a territorial entity. It is a community accepting and submitting itself under God's rule of love. It is only in the family we see self-

less love. It is not tinged with selfishness. God gave a prototype of the kingdom of God and the two important tools for the kingdom are : "Go and preach the Good News and Heal the Sick". That is *Preach and Heal*.

These are the two-fold tools given for the establishment of the kingdom of God and these are the two important aspects.

(1) *Preaching* : What is to be preached? What is the good news? The good news is categorically different from other religions. Man's efforts to find God is one thing and God searching for man is something special. This is the good news. Christianity is not a religion.

It is an experience with God. Preaching that God has come in search of you and that you are no more confined to religion but you are redeemed by love is the good news. Anyone who accepts this is reconciled to God. You are gone away from God but you are brought back to peaceful relationship with God. That is what we see in Francis Thompson's poem '*The Hound of Heaven*'. God was hunting for the human soul. God in Christ reconciled the world and this reconciled relationship with God is salvation.

What is healing? Healing, is what we think of as what happens in the hospital. After having worked for 18 years in the CMC Hospital, Vellore, I must say, healing happens outside the hospital, not inside the hospital. Of course, inside the hospital it

could happen.

There is a three-fold relationship (Gen. 1:27 and chapter 2) God created man in His own image. This is a wonderful relationship. Man is God's creature and He has created man in the image of God and that relationship is a unique characteristic. It is far above other relationship. This is a vertical relationship. Another dimension is the horizontal relationship - one with one's self.

A big chunk of the relationship is the mind's relationship with nature, at least a peripheral relationship with nature. Many times man thinks that he is above nature and he is the ruler of nature. Human history abounds in the ruptured relationship of man with nature. Seventy per cent of the illness comes from man's unfriendly relationship with nature.

When these three relationships are broken man becomes sick and healing is restoration of this ruptured relationship. When this relationship has been restored man becomes healthy.

Real healing takes place in the society. Both salvation and healing comes from the same source. Both are two sides of the same coin. Healing is reconciliation with God and nature. Salvation is restoration of the vertical relationship with God.

I personally prefer the word 'healing'. This is a better word to understand the mission and the lifestyle of the church. the lifestyle of the church is a body

* Bishop in the North Kerala diocese.

which has experienced healing. It is a healing community; it is healed, it should experience healing and the ruptured relationship should be restored. *Look at the church as the healing community.* In a hospital setting sick people are brought, and given medicine and operations done. That is crisis management. Then the other part of the healing is the preventive medicine or community medicine.

The gateway or opening to the real heart of a community is through the women. The only way you can reach a family or a cluster of families is through women. If you want to win somebody you have to win the women. Entry to a woman is through the women.

We find women do many things - raising children, feeding families, cultivating land, rearing cows, chickens, rabbits and make savings to meet future family needs. Proverb 21 describes a virtuous woman.

If you can reach women you can reach the community. Why woman? The reason is again we come across women who always operate on a feelings - level and men tempt to operate many times on a head - level. That is the most wonderful thing concerning women. Women are the ones who can really relate to people much more than anybody else. Who are the majority of people working in the health industry? The nurses. Always the caring and the ministration is given by the nursing staff. No healing can take place without them. The church is a healing community. Healing is predominantly an experience, not a thinking. That experience can be handled by no

other person in a wonderful way other than by women. This is the ministry of the church; it is here women operate. They do a marvellous work. This we have to promote and here we find the leadership.

The book of Ephesians gives beautifully an illustration of the church. There are *four 'B's*. The first 'B' defines the church as the Body of Christ. (Chapter 4 verse 15-16). For the effective functioning every part should work its share. What is in the body mechanism? Mutuality, sin is alienation. That is sickness and death. Mutuality and body are caring love i.e., caring for each other. Each part cares for others. If we do not care for others it breaks down. Caring is a feeling-level operation, not an intellectual one.

The *second 'B'* stands for *Building* which we find in Chapter 11 verses 21-22 'In Him the whole body is one'. What does the building stand for? A foundation. If one is a caring love and the other is a bearing love, it holds together. This is the lifestyle of the church.

The *third 'B'* stands for *Bride*. 'Husbands, love your wife' 25-27. The church is a bride without blemish. That is the bride. It is adoring love - complementing each other, not finding fault with each other; otherwise it ends in catastrophe. Western society is built on individualism.

The *fourth 'B'* relates to *Battle* - obeying love. But the real obedience comes not as an exercise on intellectual level, but an exercise of caring. The body building provides battle.

All these emphasize one

point, the Church is built on an operation on the feelings-level - not on an intellectual-level. It is God that gives. It is here we find the christian role and the leadership of women coming into the forefront. The christian role is that of the builders of relationships and this role of builders of relationship is something which we need to look at. We need to look at what is happening in the church today. The church exists because of women, because they do the caring love. When there is a problem or difficulty it is the women who come in. This particular role of women we should take into account.

The church's ministry is predominantly a ministry of healing. The role of women is most crucial and this role we need to have the grace to accept. It is not just getting a high position in the church. Unless we ourselves become conscious of our ability nothing could be done.

Healing is the mission of the church. It can only be done if you can have the feelings-level operation.

As we reflect upon the crucial role of the leadership and carrying out this vision in a most effective way, it comes near to a prophetic vision. A prophet is not always a person who simply forecasts. A prophet is someone who understands today the meaning of healing as the role of the community. Many times this role is not grasped by today's churches. Unless we grasp the leadership role of the women in the church, we cannot really make much progress.

Erosion of Values to Holistic Living

Mrs. Nirmala Vasantha Kumar

What are the values on which our life is based and where did the erosion begin? In Genesis when God created the universe, the nature and us, he saw everything was good except one thing - human beings. What was that that was not good? It was not good for a human being to be alone - man to be alone. Except that everything was found good and perfect. How come this erosion? Where did the downfall begin? Genesis third chapter narrates a temptation. What was the basis for this particular temptation? Have we ever thought about disobedience? What was the cause for disobedience? They wanted to become like God. They were not satisfied with what they had. God gave certain position for the human being. "Now I am handing over all my creation to you. You multiply and be fruitful steward of this creation." But it looks as though they were not happy with that position. Dissatisfaction led them to think what more they can get - craving to be something more than what was given. This led them to disobedience.

Then what happened? They ate the fruit from the forbidden tree and broke away from the fellowship with God. They knew they did something wrong which made them run away when God came. They ran away from God. Then they started blaming one another. Blaming someone else and not owning responsibility. We are not willing to own our mistake and attribute the cause of it by saying because of this person. Adam transfers the blame to Eve and Eve cleverly transfers it to the serpent by saying "the serpent you

created." By this she indirectly transfers the blame to God. This kind of evasive action, not owning up our own mistake, leads to a state of curse, where we cannot live as God wanted us to live. We want to distance ourselves from God. Then came God's curse: 'You have to work hard, you will not bear your children without pain.' If God had stopped with that it would have been alright. He curses the land. The land will not bear fruit. Adam and Eve symbolise humanity and in the process not only we should suffer but everyone and even nature too."

We have to be very careful and conscious of the fact that what I do will not only affect my family, my children, the community; the association or the fellowship I belong to, it affects everyone and everything. This is the erosion of values. The break, the estrangement come there. They are not repentant.

Genesis chapter 4 tells us how the disobedience of Adam and Eve grew in their children. When they brought their offering to God one person's offering was accepted by God. Instead of finding out why it happened like that the other person becomes angry. He could have decided that the next time when he brought his offerings he would do it in a better way so that God would accept it. But instead he finishes off his own brother. This is what we see in our own lives. If we say anything about people whom we do not like, it will result in animosity and rivalry. We do not care to find out the cause for it and make

improvements. We are not satisfied with what we have been given. If I am given a particular job I should try to do it well. Looking at another we should not grumble by saying 'why he should be given that post?' Instead of supporting the other person to perform his job well, I would try to find fault with him and in the process I would also make mistake.

In the Old Testament picture the values had gone down, deteriorating and the erosion of values was taking place steadily and reached its climax when God was fed up with it. He wanted to withdraw himself from those whom he considered his own children. In the Old Testament we see that God is not pleased with their celebrating the festivals and giving burnt offering which are required of them because they do these things as a matter of ritual and not with true repentance of heart. He says, 'unless you change your heart and your habits I am not interested in accepting your burnt offerings.' He says 'cease doing evil things, do justice, defend the widows.' But now if you do these you may lose your position, your popularity. We cannot undergo a little sacrifice so that the other person can get justice. If we travel in a bus, it is our right to sit in a particular seat but in deserving cases I should be willing to offer my seat to another person. In the Women's Fellowship, according to the constitution a person elected once can continue in office for two years and even though there is nothing preventing me from seeking re-election I should do justice by giving up so that oth-

(Contd...p.11)

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GIRL CHILD

A COMMITMENT OF THE CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA

Consultation for the CSI Campaign Promoters, 1 - 3, August 2000, CSI Centre

Co-ordinated by the Diaconal Ministry

"Champions that we all should be to the cause of the girl child not only in our communities, churches and at the national level but also world at large because we believe

that our church is universal and catholic" were the captivating opening words of Bishop B.P.Sugandhar, Deputy Moderator at the inaugural worship for the Girl Child Campaign Promoters, 1 - 3, August 2000, CSI Centre.

Moral, social and economic revolutions form the core of Mary's Magnificat and in today's context

this could be likened to the 'Song of the Girl Child'. He continued that the Church of South India

tatives and Youth Activists was deputed by their respective diocesan bishops to participate in the consultation.



Bishop B.P.Sugandhar at the Inaugural worship

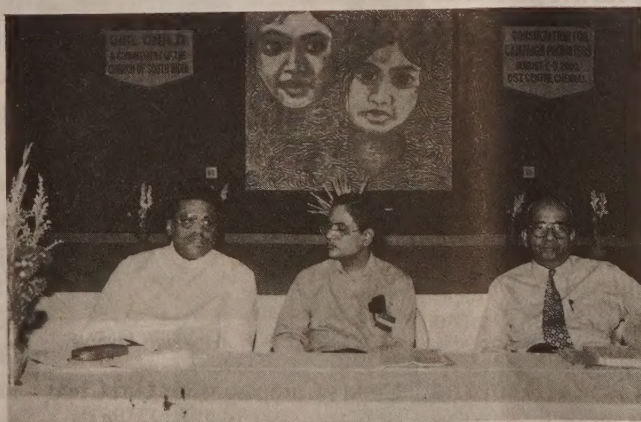
through its commitment to the cause of the Girl child affirms all life affirming forces which seek to sanctify Life - life in all its abundance and wholeness.

A core team comprising of the President of the Diocesan Women's Board, Convenor of the

Dr.Richard Devadoss, Director, Diaconal Ministry welcomed the participants to the historic Meet. Ms.Anne Rajkumar Co-ordinator, Diaconal Ministry gave the background and objectives of the Consultation.

In the first keynote address,

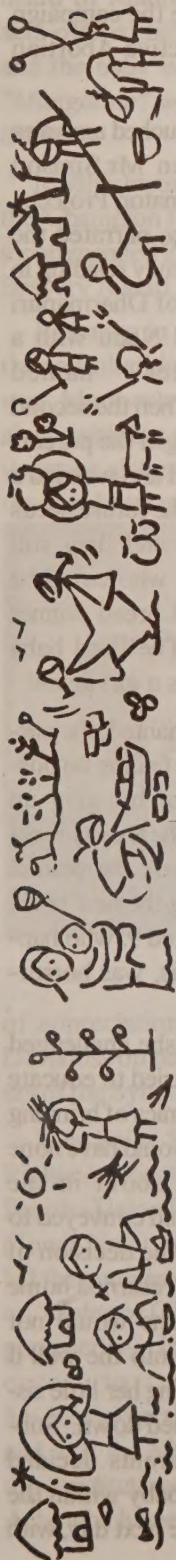
"Church's participation in the struggles of the Girl Child" Rev.Dyvasirvadam, General Secretary said "childhood is unique because every child is unblemished, innocent and dreams colourful dreams with



(From L to R) Rev.Dyvasirvadam, Dr.Richard Devadoss and Mr.Frederick William

Socio Economic Board and the Youth Board, Pastoral Represen-

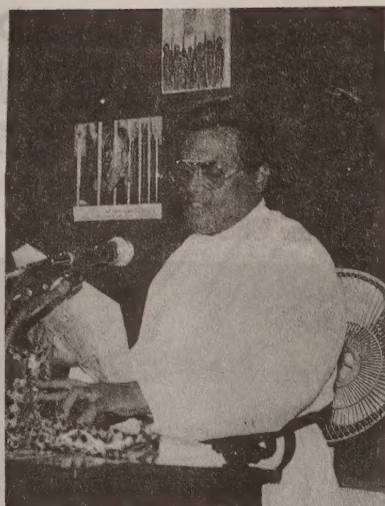
such powerful imagination that she or he is lifted up to heaven.



But there are also millions of young girls who may not understand any of this because they lead broken lives - their dreams lie shattered and they do not dare to dream". Providing a whole range of illustrations of the cruelties meted and to the Girl Child - just for being a girl, he questioned "Can the church afford to remain a mute spectator?" Exhorting the dioceses to own the vision and to rise up as one in spirit to the onerous task of mobilising resources for the Life Support Fund which forms the vital means of translating this vision that these broken and shattered lives may be healed he released the Advocacy kit which was later given to the promoters.

Mr. Frederick William, the Treasurer reaffirmed the responsibility of the church to realize the dreams of the Girl Child. He asked the participants to recognize the importance of accountability and heed the inner voice of conscience while journeying on this spiritual endeavour. He promised Rupees five thousands of which rupees two thousand one hundred and forty two - offering at the Inaugural Worship Service would go as the first contribution to the Life Support Fund, amidst rapturous applause.

The Directors of the Departments of the Synod Rev. C. V. Theodore, Rev. B. D. Prasada Rao and Rev. Dr. W. S. Milton Jeganathan present, Rev. G. Devakadasham, and Rev. Vinod Victor, in absentia extended their cooperation and support and resolved to work towards this mission of the church - " .. that hers too is the



Releasing of Advocacy kit -
Rev. Dyvasirvadham
kingdom of heaven".

Mrs. Bhagya and Mrs. Kalpana Sathish representing the Human Rights Advocacy and Research Foundation, Chennai shared their thoughts and outcome of the various campaigns they had led and associated with, pertaining to the Girl



Dr. Vasnati Devi delivering keynote address
Child - Campaigns for Girl Child in Prison and Provision of Free Education; Campaigns against child labour and sexual exploitation and discussed at length the ongoing Campaign against Sex Selective Abortion (CASSA) in Tamil Nadu. In spite of the Pre-

natal Diagnostics Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act of 1994 the heinous offence of foeticide and sex selective abortion are still rampant. In order to fight this single most horrendous crime the campaign against Sex Selective Abortion was launched.

Hearts were touched and eyes went moist when Mr. Simson Cornelius Coordinator, Projects, Diaconal Ministry, narrated the story of a poor family residing in a remote village of Dharmapuri District in Tamil Nadu with a little daughter named Madheshwari. When the second baby was again a girl the parents were disappointed and worried a great deal about the future needs of the two girls and they still looked for a boy who could be the much needed bread winner for the family. The third baby arrived and it was a girl again!

Totally disenchanted, the parents one midnight finding no possible prospects of bringing up three girls whom the society reckons as liability took the painful decision of killing the new born. Madheshwari, aged 9, who happened to hear this, was horror-struck.

At day break she challenged her parents who tried to educate her on the economics of bringing up a girl but she would have none of it. She ran about in the neighbourhood and conveyed to all nearby about the decision of her parents. She returned home and stated that she would not hesitate to jump into the well if anyone tried hurting her little sister. The matter died down. Subsequently her parents decided again to kill the baby within the same month. The next day, with

the help of her teachers and friends she even reached the police ... the murder was again prevented.

The District Collector having heard of Madheshwari's brave acts offered help to the family and the baby was aptly named "*Mangalam*" which means "*all is well*".

Madheshwari who rightly is the 'Champion for Life' has been recommended for the President's Bravery Award.

Listening in rapt attention at the consultation to the narration was Madheshwari in person along with her parents and two younger sisters. Rupees two thousand was given as a gesture

Girl and at a later stage as a woman. On being asked to spell out any particular instance, Mrs.Saila narrated the conviction of Swami Premananda who was accused of raping thirteen minor girls which the PUCL had spear headed.

The second day began with the worship service led by the dioceses from Tamilnadu and Karnataka. The third keynote address '*Social activism towards demarginalising the girl child in the present socio-cultural context*' was powerfully brought by

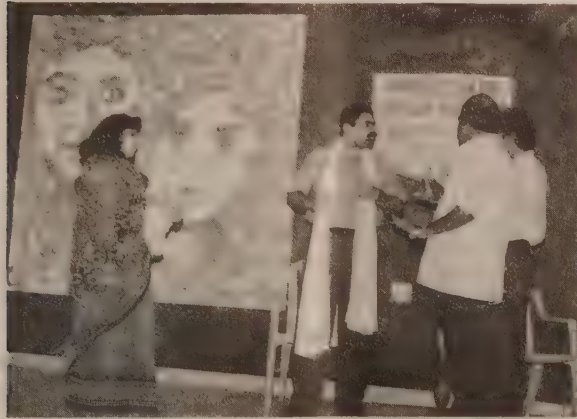
Dr.Vasanthi Devi, formerly the Vice-Chancellor of the Manonmanian Sundaranar

University and a leading human rights advocate. '*The girl Child is the most neglected, most pathetic and most un-*

wanted creature in the Indian Society today. The conscience of the country needs to be



There is still Hope - Madheshwari with family. Also seen Mr.Simpson and Rev.Jacob of BDM



A skit in progress

of appreciation by Dr.Richard Devadoss on behalf of the Officers of the Synod.

Mrs.Saila Suresh, Human Rights Advocate and member of Peoples Union for Civil Liberties (Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry) led the participants to a dialogue on 'Rights of Girl Child' - a legal perspective. Inviting the audience to reflect upon Madheshwari's human concern and zest for life she underlined the constitutional guarantees and Acts which seek to protect the

awakened and I am particularly glad and thankful that the CSI has taken up this national priority as its own mission.' she observed. The tragedy of the girl child is a mammoth problem and can not be understood or tackled in isolation and to bring about even a miniscule amelioration to the issue all our collective social action should focus on changes at micro and local level. Describing in depth about the major constraints to *the flowering of the girl child to a beautiful human being*' she led the rapt audience to a whole realm of strategic actions both at micro and macro levels that



Groups at work - Evolving Action Plans

would herald a positive change in the social cultural contexts of

A blend of creativity and poignance marked the cultural presentations by the four regions t h a t evening.

cese for placing the collection boxes, involving the youth and elders of the churches as promoters and seeking the approval of diocesan executive committee.



Worship Time

the society.

Ms.Alice Prema and Ms.Marie Bharua from Oxfam (India) in an easy conversational style shared the techniques and types of resource mobilisation and dwelt at length on the possible methodologies which the CSI can take up at local congregations and educational institutions. Highly motivated, the participants flooded them with questions ranging from the exsiting situations at the rural dioceses to the ethics of choosing the right set of donors.

gional groups to evolve a proposed set of Action Plans on the Specific Issues of campaign and the Methodology to be adopted, Launch at the dioceses, Time Frame and Coordination.

Rev.G.Dyvasirvadam, General Secretary while presiding over the *Consolidation of action plans - campaign and fund raising* suggested - September 27 (CSI Day) as the probable date for the launch at dioceses, selection of 10 congregations per dio-

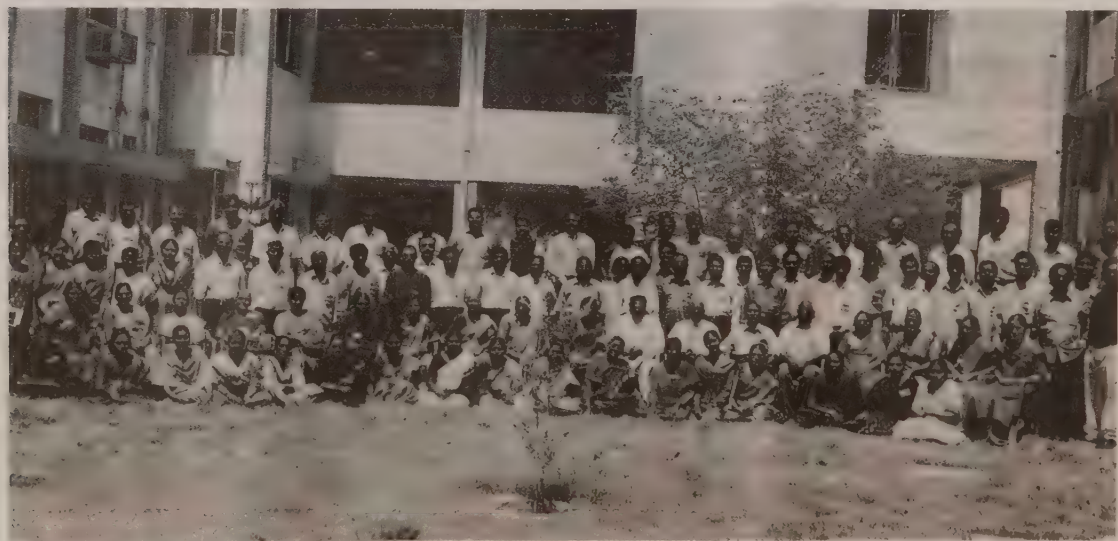
The third day devo-tions were led by the A n d h r a P r a d e s h and Kerala regions. The participants broke into their respec-tive re-

Closing worhsip marked the end of three day consultation. Touched to the very depths, all present offered this prayer of commitment to forward the mission of the church and to live a life for those denied of its full-ness -

"Gracious Father, as we now prepare to make new begin-nings, deepen our commitment to the cause of the Girl Child that we may be sensitive to pro-claim that theirs is the Kingdom of God". Ignite, inflame us that we always strive to burn re-newed and stronger in unison with you.

Make our church a living community of faith always mov-ing forward with you beside to heal these your pure but broken ones of your creation for hers too is the kingdom of God. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Anne S.M.Rajkumar
Communication & Fund Raising
Diaconal Ministry



Participants at the consultation

ers can get a chance to come to that position. But what we is people moving from one chair to another, something like a musical chair. If you want to be a different kind of leader, you must be willing to give up your position.

Rescue the oppressed: How much are we willing to take difficulties when we see the oppression against the dalits? If you want to help them you are exposing yourself to danger. If you help them you are afraid you will be denied water from the well by the high caste people and other kinds of problem will follow.

Defend the Orphan: This is the natural concern. God wanted the community to take care of them. Alien people who are not in the centre of the community is also the concern of God. All people should be given equal status.

Again when we move to Amos 4th chapter we are reminded that we are trampling down the poor. When we employ somebody in our home what is the status we give them in our home? What is the value of life we give to them?

In a house in Bangalore city the parents were celebrating the birthday of their child in a big way. There was a servant girl working in the same house. On that day she had to work very hard from early morning till 1.30 p.m. without any rest for they had invited guests for the lunch. This servant girl while removing the plate from the table licked the plate to taste the cake. This was noticed by one of the guests who mentioned it to the mistress of the house. She was annoyed and she beat the girl. If I was in her position, I would have offered the servant girl a piece of cake. In another instance, in the

house of a very high executive of a multi-national company, another servant young woman was tied to the window of the house when they were out and the window of the house opened to another house so that she had no means to communicate to any passer-by on the road. There are several cases like these.

Instances like these should make us think what the values of life are and how we practice them. How do we treat our servants in our own homes? In a gathering everybody wants to be close to the bishops and their wives to attract the attention of others.

While studying Micah we are faced with the question, can I give to God the best of my cows and sheep? Can I give the best wine?

What God wants us to do he has already said: "Do justice, show love and kindness and walk humbly before God. Show kindness to people who are rude to us. Our kindness should extend to everyone because God's kindness is to everyone. This is something we have to learn; showing kindness to people who do not deserve our kinless. Do justice and make ourselves humble before God; We have to be humble before God.

What is this holistic life all about? Is there any reference to it in the Bible? In Isaiah 65:18 it is mentioned about a new heaven and a new earth. God is not interested in our fasting and praying. What is the characteristic of the life that God wants to create or the kingdom that he wants to establish? The people will have longevity of life which is one of the signs of the kingdom of God. Long life is a blessing from God.

We see construction workers

working on building sites; building big and beautiful houses. But these workers are not going to live in those houses, nor have they any right to enter into it even though these buildings have been built through their hard work. Likewise many girls are working in garment making units, but they too can not have any garment produced by them in these factories. Farmers cannot get what they produce.

But when God creates a new life of mutuality and holistic living the farmers will eat what they produce. This will ensure the well-being of the community. 'you will not produce your children for calamity.' How many street children we see finding life very difficult? How do we give a sense of value for the holistic life to these children?

God says "when I give a new world these kinds of things will not be there. When these happen before they call I will answer them." Before you speak God is answering you. Then your relationship with God will be alright. The lion and the lamb will sleep together.

This is the type of community God wants to create and for this God wants our help. What are the things that have eroded our values? What are the things that are eating into the vitals of our community? These we have to remove.

Whether we can create the community envisaged by Isaiah whether we can live in harmony with God, with our neighbour; whether we can have enough to eat and have proper shelter; these are the issues before us. This is the new community God wants us to create. Towards this he wants you and me to work. *

Training in Mission (TIM) - Diocesan Level Programme - East Kerala Diocese

A Diocesan level Training in Mission Programme was conducted at HRDC at Melukavurattom on 3rd and 4th of July 2000. There were about 90 participants including catechists, evangelists, and bible women and lay church workers. The Most Rev. Dr.K.J.Samuel, Moderator and Bishop of East Kerala diocese inaugurated the

two day programme. Rev.Varghese Matthew, Rev.Dr.W.S.Milton Jeganathan and Rev.T.A.George were the resource persons for this programme.

This training programme focussed on two major areas, i.e., on evangelism in the midst of contemporary challenges and gospel and culture. The follow-up work has been planned and the participants were encouraged and equipped to be witnesses in their local context for the extension of the kingdom of God.

KADRI Mission

The KADRI Mission Programme was conducted on 7th and 8th July, 2000 at Kadri. This programme was specially designed to meet the needs of the Tribal communities in and around Kadri area. About 60 persons from various tribal communities participated in this programme. The Rt.Rev.A.Rajarathnam, Chairman of the Department of Mission & Evangelism and Bishop in Dornakal diocese, The Rt.Rev.C.B.M.Frederick, Bishop of Rayalaseema diocese,

Rev.B.D.Prasada Rao, Director of the Department of Christian Education and Rev.Dr.W.S.Milton Jeganathan were the resource persons for this programme.

Since there is a great need and urgency for the Ministry of 'Mission

five evangelists exclusively for Kadri Mission since this Kadri Mission is taken as a Jubilee Mission by the Synod.

It is to be noted here that there are great opportunities as well as needs in this mission field. Various active steps are being taken to implement this programme towards the extension of the kingdom of God.

Diocesan Level Programme - Madhya Kerala Diocese

A diocesan level programme for catechists, evangelists and bible women took place at the Madhya Kerala Diocesan Retreat Centre at Kottayam on 14th and 15th of July 2000. About 80

participants attended this programme.

The Rt.Rev.Sam Matthew, Bishop of Madhya Kerala Diocese, Rev.Samuel Thomas, Jr. and Rev.Dr.W.S.Milton Jeganathan were the resource persons for this programme. The officers of the diocese were present and made all the arrangements for this programme.

In order to provide intensive training for the evangelists and catechists



among Tribals' the local congregations were motivated and encouraged to take active part in this special ministry. Moreover, it was decided to have a special training programme for the local congregation members so that they could involve in this ministry in a more meaningful way.

In order to meet the needs of this special ministry, there is a proposal to appoint one mission coordinator and



RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH TO HIV/AIDS

Dr. Daniel Ezhilarasu*

AIDS is caused by a virus called human immuno deficiency virus. When a person is infected with HIV the virus attacks the key cells in the immune system. The infection causes a gradual breakdown in the total immune system of the body and becomes susceptible to all kinds of infection. The HIV infection has *three fold* routes of transmission namely: sexual, blood and blood products and mother to child perinatally.

Reports from the press indicate that HIV infection rate has registered a steep increase in India. As on June 1998, the number of AIDS cases in our country was 6058 (males 4777 + females 1282) and in the State of Tamilnadu the total number was 1624 (males 1314 + females 310). The zero positivity rate for the country was 23.39/1000 and for Tamilnadu was 15.53/1000.

HIV infection affects peoples of all backgrounds. This includes professionals, salaried people, business people, daily wage earners, skilled workers, transport workers and even students. The infection cuts across all social, religious, economic, racial and linguistic barriers though there are identifiable high-risk categories.

It has to be recognized that the effect of the infection is not only medical but also social. The infection not only affects the individual but the whole family including the relatives. The infection is passed on to children at the time of childbirth from infected mothers. The children of infected parents are looked down upon, isolated, ostracized, and stigmatized. The family is unable to maintain itself for basic needs such as food and health care. Sooner or later the spouse becomes a widow and the problem gets multiplied. Thus, the infection, which was an issue of the individual, turns out to be an issue of the community.

Intervention Strategies adopted by Government and Voluntary Agencies

The Government has initiated a number of methods to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS. The Government has set up a number of sentinel and surveillance centres throughout the country. Free blood testing centres help volunteers and blood donors to know of their HIV status. AIDS control centres have been formed to concentrate on micro level planning and implementation. There is a national network to coordinate different sentinel centres and to collect information about the various parameters of infection. The vulnerability of various epidemic centres have been identified and voluntary agencies

have been requested to monitor and help the centres to contain the infection.

Some of the voluntary agencies are involved in fighting for the human rights of the HIV infected; some agencies are involved in taking care of the children of the infected parents, the widows, and other rehabilitation activities. Educational Institutions periodically conduct awareness programmes while some have started counseling cells.

A Sociological Study and its Implications:

The present author who is a Lecturer in a christian college has been greatly concerned with this issue for several years. Out of this concern, he has done research on the socio-cultural factors influencing promiscuity in heterosexual males infected with HIV. The study was based on a detailed and semi structured interview schedule administered to 208 HIV infected males (about half of them being married). It focussed on examination of selected socio-demographic factors and family experiences during various periods in the lives of the respondents. The main concern was to formulate intervention strategies to modify the behaviours of people to reduce/prevent high-risk sexual behaviours. A brief summary of selected findings is presented here. It is hoped that this may help our churches to formulate their own programmes to respond to this pandemic.

1. Age: It was found that 57% of the respondents were below 30 years age; this should cause great concern. The youngest respondent was aged 19 years indicating that he would probably have been infected soon after he had become sexually active. The average age of the spouse of the married respondents was 27 indicating that these women are likely to lose their husband's support at least 10 years earlier than normal and will be doubly burdened with bringing up children.

2. Economic Factors: The majority of the respondents belong to low and middle income brackets and this emphasizes that the adverse consequences of HIV infection will be more serious on such families.

3. Family Experiences: The study showed that half of the married respondents were members of joint families and 96% of the single respondents were living with the parents indicating that traditional family authority and control seem to have been eroded. It was also found that nearly

50% of the respondents reported absence of monitoring by the parents, non-involvement in family prayers and family chores during their teen age.

4. Peer Group and Media Influence:

On the other hand, it was reported that person to person sharing of information among peers is the commonest source of knowledge about sexual matters. 75% of the respondents revealed that sex movies are the commonest source of information in addition to print media like pornographic material. About 88% of the respondents had their first sex experience in teen age and it was found that habits like consuming alcohol during picnics with friends and watching sex movies in groups had a significant correlation with sexual activity.

5. Premarital Experiences:

It was found that the predominant reason for premarital sexual relationship was 'staying away from home' (58%). One reason stated was that the relative anonymity in a new place gave a sense of freedom not available in the hometown. The next reason being the proximity of the commercial sex centres in the place of stay (21%). Of course, 'late marriage' was also cited as one of the important factors for premarital experience.

6. Extra Marital Experience:

It was very interesting to note that the major reason which induced married respondents (41%) to have extramarital sex is 'staying away from home'. 'Unhappy married life' (27%) is the second most important factor of the reason cited for unhappy married life, the most important factor of the reason cited for unhappy married life, the most important being lack of awareness of the sexual needs of the spouse (odds ratio 8:1). Absence of wife at home during her pregnancy is one of the reasons for extramarital sexual experience.

7. Lack of Sex Education in Educational Institutions:

One of the most significant findings is the total absence of involvement of parents and teachers in providing education about sex. Sex education is not part of the school or college curriculum. Talk of sex is considered to be taboo in school. Further, our society does not consider the parents as source of information regarding sex and sexual norms for growing children.

Need for Involvement of the Church

The Mission of the church has widened both in context and content. New challenges have been posed to the church

as human predicament continues to become more complex. In every aspect of human life, there arise situations where the hindrances to full humanity are more evident than what was before. Economic, social and political spheres are affected by global policy decisions, which are controlled by powerful nations. In the health concerns, not only disease and illness play major role but also social consequences of such diseases have important effect on the total well being of communities.

When we speak of the mission to man, we speak of the holistic understanding of human beings and therefore any phenomenon which has impact on large sections of people should become an important concern for the church.

Therefore, the incidence of HIV/AIDS infection, which has already affected sizeable percentage of the human population and threatens to affect even a larger percentage, must be of great concern for the church. Thus, there is a great challenge for the church to face the impact on the society as a whole by HIV/AIDS.

The investigation referred above indicated clearly that the most vulnerable section of the population affected either directly or indirectly is in the age group of 20-35. This is the group commonly described as young adults. Therefore, the churches must focus their attention on this group and bring about behavioural and

attitudinal changes.

Another striking result is the importance of parent behaviour. The type of environment, which the child experiences while growing up, plays a significant role in the development of the attitude of the child. Therefore the churches must formulate programmes for the parents to help them realize their great responsibility in this area.

The following suggestions may be considered by the church to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS.

1. Family counseling becomes very important in this context. Insights from professional counsellors on the ways by which discipline and mutual responsibility can be developed within the family may be made available. Marital fidelity, which is a biblical concept and a christian virtue, should be emphasized along with the awareness that the health of the other spouse is a responsibility of each partner. Similarly, stewardship of family finances should not be endangered by irresponsible behaviour on the part of husband or wife. In other words, churches' programmes of family counseling should be re-oriented to emphasize marital fidelity and responsible stewardship of resources like time, money and responsibility toward bringing up children etc. not only on the basis of spiritual dimension but also in relation to social obligation directed towards total well be-

ing of the family.

2. The Sunday school can play a dominant role in developing proper attitude of respect towards parents and other elders at home and also social responsibility.

3. Nurturing proper value system in young adults should become the focus of the church in dealing with the challenge posed by growing HIV infection. The churches must introduce programmes of counselling (premarital) which would inculcate in young people the need to take proper care of their bodies.

4. The churches can have net-working to provide fellowship and pastoral care to young people who move from their hometowns to other places because of their work etc.

5. Youth groups can be encouraged to discuss at length the socio-economic and ethical issues in understanding the impact of AIDS.

6. The churches can conduct programmes of Bible Studies for young people to realize the preciousness of human sexuality as a gift from God.

7. Churches should cooperate with those agencies, which are fighting for the rights of the HIV infected persons, and wherever possible must be directly involved in care and rehabilitation of such persons.

* Lecturer, Voorhees College, Vellore

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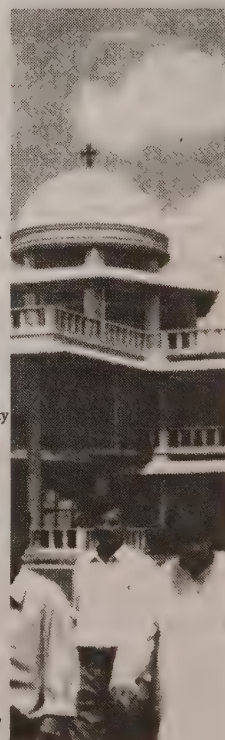
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Holy Land Study Tour - 2000

In the millennium year of our Lord the CSI team was privileged to visit the Holy Land from 29th July to 10th August 2000. The team consisted of 20 pastors from the 20 national dioceses, one synod office staff, one CCC YC worker, seven lay persons (on payment), one bishop and the Director, PAD. During the sojourn of this group for 9 days, the study pilgrims discovered, walked, meditated, studied and prayed in the Mount of Olives, Churches of Pater Noster and Dominus Flievites, Jesus' ascension site, Path of Palm Sunday, Garden of Gethsemane,

Mount Zion, the Upper Room, the Temple area, the Dolorosa, the Church of Holy Sepulchre, the Church of Nativity, the Shepherds Field, Bethany, Jericho, Dead Sea, Qumran, Massada, Ein-Karam, the Holocaust Museum, the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) Mamre, Hebron, Solomon's Pool, Jordan, Rachel's Tomb, Caesarea, Haifa, Mount Carmel, Lake of Galilee, Capernaum, Nazareth, Cana and Mount Tabor in Israel.

After the refreshing visits to Holy sites the team moved to Amman in Jordan. The final destination was Mount Nebo, the traditional site of Moses viewing the promised land. The Bible says that Moses died there, but

nobody knows his burial place. We had a panoramic view of the land of milk of honey beyond river Jordan from Mount Nebo which reassured God's promise to us. We formally closed the tour in Mount Nebo and boarded the flight in Amman to fly back to India.

The participants experienced the guiding presence of God throughout the programme. The struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve their rights reflects in all areas of life in the Holy Land. It was unfortunate to see young men and women soldiers carrying rifles parading the city of peace. The Holy Land needs our prayers for realizing the real peace from God.



(Contd. from p. 12) it was suggested for Deanery level programmes in the diocese. It was a great opportunity for the catechists and evangelists so that they could be equipped in God's Mission in their local contexts.

Andhra Regional Programme

A regional programme for catechists, evangelists and bible women took place at the Medak Diocesan Office Campus at Secunderabad on 21st and 22nd of July 2000. In total 60 catechists, evangelists and bible women from all the six Andhra dioceses participated in this programme.

'Equipping the local congregations for Mission' was the main focus for this programme. The Rt.Rev.Dr.B.P.Sugandhar, Bishop of Medak diocese, The Rt.Rev.A.Rajaratnam, Chairman of the Department of Mission & Evangelism and Bishop of Dornakal, Rev.Dr.George Matthew, Executive Secretary of Mission & Evangelism Unit of the NCCI and Rev.Dr.W.S.Milton Jeganathan were the resource persons for this programme.

Mission in the midst of contem-

porary challenges, new methodologies and strategies to be adopted in the mission field, gospel and culture were dealt with during this programme. It was also suggested to have a regional level resource team for the implementation of the programmes at the diocesan levels.

The evangelists, catechists and bible women were motivated to serve as agents of liberation in their local congregational levels.

-Rev.Dr.W.S.Milton Jeganathan,
Director, Mission & Evangelism.

EMERGING YOUTH LEADERS GET-TOGETHER

A four day training programme for emerging youth leaders of the 21 dioceses of the CSI was held at the CSI Youth Centre, Kovalam Trivandrum from the 24th to the 27th of August 2000. The inaugural session held at the LMS Compound was graced by the presence of Mr. Frederick Williams the Synod Treasurer. Bishop George Isaac the Chairperson of the Department presided and Bishop JW Gladstonedelivered the key note address. Mr. V.S. Sivakumar MP inaugurated the programme. The resource persons included senior IAS officers Mr.M.S. Joseph the State Election Commissioner and Mr.Jiji Thompson the State Revenue Secretary; renowned academician Professor Hrudayakumari, Dr. S. Devanesan and Rev.Vinod Victor. The group discussions on the Christ model of leadership evoked great interest. The participants found the entire exercise very rewarding.

THE CSI COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA

The 14th Family and Youth Conference of the CSI Council of Churches in North America was held from the 10th to 13th of August 2000 at the Grant Resort Convention Centre, Pigeon Forge, Smoky Mountains, Tennessee. The Moderator Most Rev. K.J.Samuel, inaugurated the Conference. The resource persons included Dr.Sam Kamalesan, Dr.Pushparaj, Mr. Scott Armstrong, Rev. & Mrs. Vinod Victor and Sr. Thankamma Varkey. Over 600 people from the 24 CSI Congregations from across the United States and Canada participated. There were many international visitors including Rev.Paul Francis of Madras.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

We had the privilege of spending three weeks in the United States from the 1st to 21st August 2000. We spent time with the Reformed Church in America, the CSI Congregations Family and Youth Conference, the Methodist Church in Fountain Valley Los Angeles and friends in Florida and San Diego, California and a CSI Congregation in New York. Having had opportunities to share with the young and the old the major questions that are bothering our brothers and sisters there could be identified as

i. The Conflict in Cultures

The culture of the womb and the culture of the context are in a creative tension within the youngsters. They are unable to enter into the collective sub conscious level of their culture as their parents could and are forced to define for themselves the definitions of the normal.

ii. The Discrimination Factor

Despite the claims that there is no discrimination it is a fact that color does play a role in the relationship dynamics of the context, though quite often not very explicit. The sense of differentness would then kindle a search for a proper identity to affirm the place that is due unto them.

iii. The Worship Factor

While the elder generations see worship as a means of cultural continuity the youngster feel alienated in the same process. The liturgy with an unwarranted rigidity is becoming a bone of contention rather than means of unity. The language though dear to the bosom of the parental generations is less so for the youth to find a relevant means of communication. With the prosperity cult gaining great inroads in the materialistic context

the youngsters find our worships less emotionally stimulating. The inherent potential within the CSI Liturgy is not sought. Many youngsters have an array of suggestions on worship. It is high time that a dialogue happens between the generations to make worship meaningful and relevant.

iv. Materialistic Values

Materialism and spirituality seldom go hand in hand. The deeper urge for the "beyond" usually emanates from the sense of vacuum within that makes the kingdom concept relevant. Even the God concept is commoditised and some even dare to ask "What will I get if I worship there ?" !!! God is considered a slave up there bound to answer all prayers while the real master would be the "powerful buck".

v. Family

The sacredness attributed to the family is gradually fading away. Sexuality is no longer the exclusive domain of the sanctified twosome. With definitions of licentiousness and adultery watered down relationships are being redefined. There is more a talk on independence rather than inter dependence.

This has to be urgently addressed. The parents are bothered very much about the loss of the bonds of affection in many homes. This is in no way underestimating the reality that there are still many very very strong families in the United States.

vi. Identity

The very identity of Church of South India in the United States leaves much to be pondered over.

There is much more to this. The constraint of space limits.

Rev.Vinod Victor



The Count Down Begins.....

Church of South India Synod Youth Festival 2000

Dates : 2 - 5, November 2000

Venue : Shanthi Nilayam Agricultural Institute,

Kasam (New Springs), Diocese of Vellore

Theme : "Lord, Make Us Channels of Your Peace"

Inauguration : The Most Rev. K. J. Samuel, Moderator

Bible Studies: The Rev. G. Dyvasirvadam

Theme Presentation: The Rt.Rev. J.W.Gladstone

Host Bishop : The Rt. Rev. Mahimai Rufus

Chairperson : The Rt. Rev. George Isaac

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Mock Synod Session

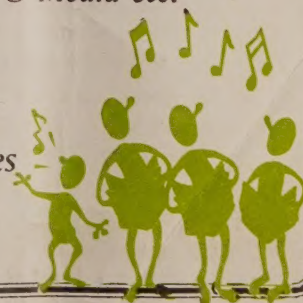
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